

*Inspiration of the Moral Parts
of Scripture Asserted.* No 14

A

ERMON

Preached at the

Triennial Visitation

MAH21 203
OF THE

Eight Reverend FATHER in GOD,

RICHARD,

Third Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, held at
the Cathedral-Church, in Lichfield, on Wednesday,
Aug. 29. 1744.

which the Sentiments of Mons. Le-Clerc, and
Dr. Sykes, relating to this Point, are Considered.

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Published at the Request of his Lordship and the Clergy.

OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE for James Fletcher Bookseller
in the Turl, and Sold by J. and P. Knapton, in Ludgate-
Street; S. Birt, in Ave-Maria-Lane; J. Rivington, in
St. Paul's Church-Yard; and R. Bailye, at Lichfield. 1745.

Imprimatur,
EUS. ISHAM,
Vice-Can. Oxon.

Jan. 18. 1744-5.



TO THE
Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,
R I C H A R D,
LORD BISHOP OF
Lichfield and Coventry;

XON
This DISCOURSE,
As a Small Testimony of Duty
and Gratitude,

Is,

With all Respect and Humility,

DEDICATED

By the AUTHOR.

THE
LATE RICHARD
BISHOP OF LICHFIELD,
Lately Publish'd by the same
A U T H O R.

An Enquiry into the Scripture-Doctrine concerning the Duration of Future Punishment: in which the Texts of the New Testament, relating to this Subject, are considered; and the Doctrine, drawn from them alone, is shewn to be consistent with Reason. Occasion'd by some late Writings, and particularly Mr. Whiston's Discourse of Hell-Torments.

2 TIM. III. 16, 17.

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness:

That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.

THE Importance of the Argument to which these Words direct us, is evident from the Necessity of Divine Inspiration, to give a proper Weight and Authority to the Records of our holy Religion. For supposing it to be proved that there really is a Revelation given by God to Mankind, there is still a Question to be satisfied, viz. Where is this Revelation to be found? And if in answer to This, Men be referred (as they must be referred) to the Scriptures; it may still farther be demanded, What security have we, that these Scriptures themselves are free from Error? If we say, with

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the Apostle, that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*, one wou'd think that when this Point was once clear, nothing farther wou'd be expected. He is equally exempt from the possibility of Deceiving, and of being Deceived; and his Word, like himself, is Light and Truth, and in It is no Falshood, or Error at all.

But we seem not to receive the same compleat Satisfaction, as to this point, if we are only told, that some Part indeed of the Scripture, (as Prophecies and certain Doctrines, must be inspired; but as for other Parts, consisting of History or Morals, there is no Need and no Evidence of Inspiration: In one Case *Men wrote with great Faithfulness*, in the other *with a pious Intention.*

This Account of the Inspiration of the Holy Scripture seems in great measure to destroy what before had been built up; the Enquiry is left to fluctuate in Uncertainty; the sacred Volumes will lose much of their veneration; the Church of God, which is *built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone*^a, will be sorely shaken; and every profane Hand will

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be encouraged to take away piece after piece, till (to speak in Allusion to the Fate of the material Temple,) there will *not be left one Stone upon another*^{2.}

The Revival of these notions makes this Subject as seasonable, as it is important; and though nothing *new* upon it will be expected by this learned Audience, yet I trust their Candour will indulge me, while I remind them of the old approved Arguments, at a time when others are not ashamed to revive the old exploded Objections. I propose therefore,

First, To enquire into the Meaning of these Words of the Apostle; —

And then to assert and prove the Doctrine delivered in them.

No one, I believe, that reads St. Paul's words without a Comment, will easily mistake their meaning; or make any Doubt, but that he here asserts the compleat Inspiration of the Old Testament at least, as it was that Part of scripture which *Timothy had known from a Child*. The Holy Scriptures, or the Scripture, in the Mouth of a Jew, or (what is much the same) some educated in the Jew's Religion, and who

had no Difference with them upon this Article, would certainly be understood to signify that Collection of sacred Writings which was then received, and constituted the Canon of the Jewish Church. That was the same then which it is at this Day ; and therefore whatever Difficulties Critics may raise, about the Time when this Collection was made, or the Persons concerned in making it ; if St. Paul declares that the whole Collection was given by Inspiration, this Point, as far as his authority prevails, seems to be sufficiently secured. And the Reason of the Case, at least, extends to the New Testament, a considerable Part of which was likewise written before this Epistle to *Timothy* ; So that in this view, we are assured that all the Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testament, were given by *Inspiration of God.*

But though this seems to be the plain and natural meaning of the words, as they lie in our English Bibles, yet if we consult some writers for the meaning of them, they will tell us, that it is only This^a ; that all Scripture that is *divinely inspired*, is also *profitable*.

^a See *Five Letters concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scripture* p. 189, &c.

the Purposes hereafter mentioned. This Interpretation, however, does some violence both to the words, and to the Sense. Ήαμ
χαρη, in all probability, signifies, collectively, the whole Body of Sacred Scripture; and numerous Instances might be produced out of the New Testament, where *this* has this signification, and is of the same Import with ὁλος. However, if it should here be understood distributively, it is still asserted that every Scripture, that is, every part of Scripture, is divinely inspired: Though it is not so easy to comprehend, how every Part of Scripture, singly and by itself, is also profitable for *Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* This is a Character, which the whole System of the sacred Writings deserve; and by all of them together these Ends are sufficiently answered: But that every part alone is of such universal Use, is singly able to perfect the man of God, and throughly to furnish him unto all good works, is a point neither clear in itself, nor easy to be proved.

If to avoid this Difficulty it be said, that the meaning is, that all Scripture that is divinely inspired, be it more or less, is, taken all together, profitable for these purposes; it is to be farther observed, (and it is the main obser-

observation of all,) that the Text will not admit of this Rendring. For the words are not *πῶν χαρὴν θεόπνευστος, ὡφέλιμος &c.* as if *θεόπνευστος* was part of the Subject; But *πῶν χαρὴν θεόπνευστος καὶ ὡφέλιμος, &c.* Where the Conjunctive Particle is an effectual Barrier against this sense, and plainly shews that *θεόπνευστος* and *ὠφέλιμος* are equally predicated of the Scripture. But this meaning will be more readily admitted, when the Proof is made out; and therefore I may proceed,

Secondly, To assert and prove this Doctrine of the Compleat Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

Only it may be remembered first, that the Controversy here is not with Infidels, who deny all Inspiration whatsoever, but with Those, who deny, or doubt of, the Inspiration of some parts only of Scripture: The Debate is not about the Being or Reality of Inspiration, but the Extent of it. Secondly, the Point asserted is, that the writings of the Old and New Testament were, all of them, *given by Inspiration of God;* not that the writers themselves were, at all times, and in all the Actions of their Lives, absolutely exempt either from Error, or Sin. Any Defects therefore

either

either in their Conduct, or their Knowledge, upon other Occasions, are nothing to the purpose. Thirdly, It is not intended, because it is not necessary, to plead for a verbal Inspiration, or for the same Degree of Inspiration in all Cases; but only that they were conducted by some extraordinary Direction and Assistance, which enabled them always, without Danger of Mistake or Error, to answer the Ends designed to be promoted by them.

Scripture is a miscellaneous Composition; there are in it Prophecies, and Doctrines, and History, and Morals. The Inspiration of Prophecy is allowed. St. Peter says plainly that *Prophecy came not in old time, (or at any time,) by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*². It has sometimes been pretended, that these words of St. Peter are an Explanation of our Text; and that all the Scripture meant by St. Paul, is only the *Prophecy of the Scripture*, which St. Peter says was not of the private Motion, or personal Knowledge, of the Prophet's own Mind, but proceeded originally from the Holy Ghost. But this point likewise is given up by

the Writer I have now in view^a; who contends that there is another part of Scripture, besides the Prophetick, which must necessarily be inspired; and that is the Part which contains "certain Doctrines, and Commands, or Injunctions, which Reason could not trace out, but which when revealed appear to be perfectly agreeable to Reason." By *Commands*, or *Injunctions*, he cannot here be supposed to mean those which relate to Morality, because his avowed Principle is, that all Morality may be known by natural Reason; and that Revelation is not at all necessary to fix a Rule of Morality. Whether therefore he intends the Two positive Institutions of Christianity, or whatever else his meaning may be, This seems plain enough, that he does not think that the *Moral*, any more than the *Historical*, Portions of Scripture were given by *Inspiration of God* only; "An honest Man," says he^b, "may demand Moral proof, that moral Truths, and Historical Facts, are the immediate Effect of Inspiration." The point therefore between us, is reduced to this, whether the Histories, and the Morals of the Scripture, were given by Inspiration?

^a The Author of *the Principles and Connexion of Natural and Revealed Religion*: See page 121, 122. ^b See p. 118.

That the Moral part of Scripture was inspired, seems evident, in the first place, from the Text: *All Scripture, says the Apostle, was given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness;* where Interpreters both Ancient and Modern understand the whole Compass both of Faith and Practice, referring the two first to Error, or Truth, of Doctrine, and the two last to Viciousness, or Integrity, of Life. But determine as you please as to the Exactness of this Distinction, it is plain the Apostle sets the Moral Scriptures upon the same Foot with the Doctrinal, and stamps them equally with the same Character of Divine Inspiration. *The Man of God* (whether that signifies the able Minister, or only the Pious Christian,) cannot be perfect by Faith only; nor can the Speculative, exclusive of the Moral, Doctrines of Scripture, *throughly furnish him unto all good Works.* But this Point need not be rested upon the Authority of this Passage alone; it will appear from many Considerations of Reason, and from many other Authorities of Scripture.

The great Usefulness of Moral Doctrine, and its vast Importance to Mankind, will not be questioned. *The End of the Commandment*

*is Charity^a ; the End of all teaching, of all Instruction, of all Revelation itself, by this Author's own Account^b, is virtuous Practice. Suppose a System of Doctrines revealed from Heaven, and a long Series of Prophecy given by Inspiration of God ; what purpose do they serve ? And what End were they designed to promote ? They were not given for their own Sake, for the Sake only of being given ; say then they were given for the Interest of true Religion. But what is true Religion without true Virtue ? This is the great End of all God's Dealings with Mankind ; the great Design of that last and best Dispensation of the Gospel, which is that *Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World^c*. Is it then reasonable to suppose, that less Care should be taken of the End, than of the Means ? Can we imagine, that when a Rule of Faith is revealed by Divine Wisdom, a Rule of Life (of equal Importance at least,) should be left entirely to the Discoveries, or the Deductions, of Human Reason ? Shall a Prophet be sent from God, in an extraordinary manner, to de-*

^a 1 Tim. I, 5. ^b See p. 254. ^c Tit. II, 11, 12.

clare his Will on special Emergencies, and on particular Occasions? And shall it seem a thing incredible with you, that Prophets should be sent to declare that whole Will of God, which is of universal Use and Concernment, which is the standing Law and Rule of Life, and which to know and to practise is the Perfection of Human Nature?

There seems to be Something in this way of reasoning, which cannot well be evaded, but by saying that Inspiration, which is necessary in one Case, is needless in the other. Prophecies, and Doctrines of pure Revelation, must come from God in this extraordinary manner; but Morality, if it be important, is no easy; is founded in Truth and Nature, may be traced out by Reason, is commonly known, and what God has given us sufficient Care powers ourselves to discover: And it is neither usual, nor necessary, for God to intercede in Cases, for which he has, in his ordinary Providence, sufficiently provided^a.

The Foundation of this Reasoning proceeds on a Maxim which, as it is often applied, is good for nothing. It is not *necessary*, you say, that God should give us Rules of Morality, by

^a Compare Pages 117 and 127.

way

way of Inspiration. And what then? If it be not necessary, it may be *serviceable*, it may be *beneficial*, to his Creatures. And does God do nothing but what is *necessary*? Is this an amiable Idea of the Sovereign Goodness? This which seems rather derived from the Conduct of indigent and frugal Mortals, than to suit with the exuberant Beneficence and Riches of the Divine Nature? And what Instance is there of any thing, pertaining to *Life and Godliness*, in which God has not done much more than was *necessary*, even *abundantly* more than we could either *ask, or think*^b?

But if this should go for nothing, it is farther to be observed, that it might be necessary, (necessary for some purposes, though not for others,) that the Moral parts of Scripture should be given by Inspiration. In this way there is an Authority stampt upon them, which otherwise they would want^c. There are but two ways of teaching Morality to any considerable purpose; it must be done in the way of Authority, or by Demonstration. It is plain that how capable soever Morality may be in itself of Demonstration, it is not demonstra-

a 2 Pet. I. 3. b Ephes. III. 20. c See the Lord Bishop Lichfield and Coventry's Charge to his Clergy in 1738 and 1739. I. II.

it be in Scripture. If then you take away that Divine Authority on which it is supposed to stand, what Else do you leave to support it? What Weight or Influence will the Moral Precepts of the Bible have, if once they come to be considered only in this Light, as so many moral Sentences of Wise Men? Would the Ten Commandments, for Instance, be equally regarded, and so effectually engage our Obedience to them, if they were supposed to be the Words only of a Man wholly uninspired? Yet one would think it was not impossible that so great a Lawgiver as Moses, so learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians^a, might have been able to do Something of this kind himself. Nevertheless, we see, this matter was not left to him, but God wrote them himself with his own Finger upon two Tables of Stone^b. But this is too plain to be insisted on:

It must farther be said, and it has often been proved by many Writers^c, that a Compleat Rule of Life is not easily, if at all, discoverable by mere Reason. And from some

^a Acts VII. 22. ^b Exod. XXIV. 12. XXXI. 18. XXXII. 15, 16.

^c Dr. Clark, Evid. Nat. and Rev. Religion: p. 272 &c. 7th. Edit. Dean Conybeare. Serm. Expediency of a Divine Revelation; and Defence of Revival'd Religion, Ch. V. Dr. Rogers. Eight Sermons. Serm. I. II.

Passages even of our Author himself it should appear, that Morality is a Science of considerable Difficulty; how much soever he may contend, on other occasions, that it is all knowable by natural Reason. Our Moral Ideas are not innate, any more than any other; "the Knowledge of good Morals, says he^a, is not "born in every, or any Man;" — "But Men "come at the knowledge of Morality, just as "they do at the knowledge of other things, "by being taught." But who shall teach them? Those, one would think, should be best qualified to do it, who had made this Branch of Knowledge their particular Study. But the Misfortune is, that when this Science was most cultivated, it became most intricate and perplexed, by the Disputes and Differences of the Philosophers themselves.

When *Socrates* had diverted their attention, which had almost wholly been confined to the Study of Nature, to a Subject which more nearly concerned them, there rose up Sect after Sect, contradicting and confuting each other; differing about the very End, the Chief Happiness of Man, and by Consequence differ-

^a See p. 261.

ing about the Means that lead to it^a. What Method then shall the Disciple prefer, when the Masters themselves are all at Variance? And what Way shall the Enquirer take, when each of his Guides give him a different Direction? "Has not every Principle of Morality, says our Author, been as much the Subject of Debate and Difference, as the Precepts, or Doctrines of Revelation have? Has not the Existence of God; the Liberty of Man; the Nature of Good and Evil; what is Happiness; what it is that thinks in us; whether the Soul be immaterial or not, immortal or not; the Nature of Justice, moral Honesty; in short every Point of Morality or natural Religion been controverted^b."

It should seem then that there is some Darkness and Difficulty in this Subject; and if God may in any Degree remove it, by inspiring men to deliver the Doctrines of Morality, in plain authoritative manner, it should seem so that this is a Design, not unworthy of so wise and gracious a Being. If the Rule of Life Truth, it is not easy for every Man, or any man, to find out the whole Truth; which con-

Nam omnis Ratio vitæ definitione Summi Boni continetur;
qua qui dissident, de omni Ratione vitæ dissident. *Vid. Cœ.*
Ed. Olivet. p. 55. *b See p. 285.*

sists not in any particular Circumstance, Relation, or Habitude of things, but in all of them put together. If it be founded in the Nature of things, or in the Relations which intelligent Beings stand in to one another; are all these discoverable, and easily discoverable, even by Men of the best Abilities? And if this truth of things be (as it is allowed to be^a) the Same in effect, with the Nature, and Will of God; *Canst thou by searching find out God's Nature and Will?* *Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection^b?*

But supposing that all Morality may be known by natural Reason, and that a great Progress was made in this Science by the Philosophers of *Greece* and *Rome*; we are still to remember, that the Scripture-Morals came from another kind of Men, in a secluded Corner of the Earth. What was there peculiar in the Soil of *Judea*, that the purest and most genuine Fruits should flourish there? How comes it to pass that all Antiquity has delivered down to us but one Book, that is free from all Blasphemy, or Defect? And yet this Book was composed by various Authors, at very distant Periods of Time. Still all is Consistent, all is uncontradicting.

^a See p. 91. ^b Job XI. 7.

form, all breathes the same Spirit, all conspires to the same End: And though running as it were in various Streams, through different Soils and Channels, yet it preserves its native Purity amidst all the Pollution that surrounds it; and thence discovers that the Source it proceeds from, is the *Fountain of living Waters*. But what Consistency is there in the Pagan Moralists, compared with one another? What Immorality is there not, considered in themselves? Do not some or other of them encourage Self-murder, the Practice of exposing Children, Fornication, Uncleanness, and even the Sin not to be named? And do not all of them offend most grievously against the first Principle and Duty of natural Religion, the Unity and Worship of the one true God, by directing Men to comply with the Idolatry peculiar to and Superstitions of their Country? Is any thing like this to be found in the Bible, tho' the Hebrew-Scriptures were written while that Nation in general were very prone to Idolatry?

It is certain and evident Matter of Fact, that we cannot take any number, (hardly any is unique,) of the Pagan Moralists, against whose Doctrines, in some parts or other, there will not lie very great Exceptions. But nothing

of this kind appears in the Scripture-Morals; nothing, but what fairly understood, is capable of a just Vindication: So that from the very Purity and superiour Excellency of them one would imagine, that they were drawn up under a Conduct more than Human. It is true indeed they are not formed into a regular System, according to the Rules of Art practised by Men. And in this Sense what our Author says may be true^a, "that nothing equal "to the *Ethics of Tully*, or *Aristotle*, was wrote "for the first Sixteen Centuries of Christiani- "ty." But then, the Purity of Moral Doctrine does not at all depend upon the Exactness of Method in which it is delivered. The Systems of these two great Men, with all their Art and Order, were as beneficial perhaps to the Common People of *Greece* and *Rome*, as the Religion of Nature Deliniate is to the Common People of *England*. While the Gospel reformed the World; and neglecting the Rules of Artificial Method, and the enticing Words of *Man's Wisdom*^b, converted the Hearts and renewed the Spirits of Men, turning them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God^c. Then indeed the Pagan Moral

^a See p. 227. ^b 1 Cor. II. 4. ^c Acts XXVI. 18.

thought

though it endeavoured to serve itself of the Gospel, sunk into Neglect, eclipsed by the superior Lustre of the Christian. Cold and languid were its Precepts to a Heart inflamed with the Love of a dying Redeemer, and an empty lifeless Form it appeared, void of all Strength and Beauty, to those first and most faithful Disciples of the Cross, *before whose Eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, Crucified among them*^a. Pagan Morality is little more than a Shell and a Carcass, for want of an inward Principle to animate and inform it. This mere Body may derive its Origin from the Earth, as the first Man's from the *Dust of the Ground*; but the Inspiration of the Almighty is the *Breath of Life*, by which it becomes a living Soul.

These Considerations may be of some Weight; but to draw this Matter to a Point, we must attend to the Sacred Writings themselves, and the Testimony they bear to one another. The Sacred Writings were, for the most part, compiled by Men, who it is granted were inspired upon some Occasions; and the moral Parts of them lie mingled and intermixt with other Matters, which were allowed-

ly given by *Inspiration of God.* Thus as to *Moses and the Prophets* for the Old Testament, they were inspired in their Prophecies; and can we think that this Inspiration immediately forsook them, whenever they began to deliver or inculcate the Rules of Morality? They wrote these Things at the same Time, and in the same Page. And is it reasonable to suppose they were inspired this Moment, and left to themselves the Next? And then perhaps inspired again the Moment after that, in order to foretel some future Event? Is not prophesying in the other Sense of that Word, as it signifies to declare the Will of God, the standing Law and Rule of Life, as useful and as noble an Office, as predicting things to come? And why then should not the Holy Spirit be thought equally to provide for both Cases, and to prevent any false prophesying in either Sense? Besides, any one may see that the Prophets themselves make no Distinction in this Matter, but deliver their moral Instructions as they do their Predictions, in the Name, and by the Authority of God, with a — *Thus saith the Lord,* and, *Hear the Word of the Lord.* There as to the other Class of Writings in the Old Testament, which are chiefly, or only, of a Moral Nature; they were either composed by

Men

Men who are known to have had some extraordinary Intercourse with Heaven, or at least they were always received by the Jewish Church, as drawn up under a Divine Influence; and they appear to be quoted under that Character by Christ and his Apostles, in like manner as they quote the other Scriptures.

David does not only say of himself, — *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue^a*; but Christ also, the Son of David, plainly intimates the same Thing, — *How then doth David in Spirit call him Lord^b?* And having occasion to quote to the Jews a passage from the *Psalms*, he tells them that it was written in their *Law^c*. And when, after his Resurrection, he expounded to his Disciples *it be all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself, he tells them in Conclusion, that all things either must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him^d.* St. Peter says expressly that David was a Prophet^e; and in a Psalm of Im-
punity, and Recitation, which has often been the Mark of infamy and reproach, he declares *the Holy Ghost Then make by the Mouth of David^f.* St. Paul has ma-

^a 2 Sam. XXIII. 2. ^b Matt. XXII. 43. ^c John XV. 25. ^d Luk. XIV. 27, 44. ^e Acts II. 30. ^f Acts I. 16, 20.

ny Allegations from the *Psalms*, too numerous to be repeated; argues from them in the same manner as he does from the Scriptures of the Prophets, and lays an equal Stress upon their Authority^a. St. Paul in more places than one alledges the Book of *Proverbs*, and St. James in one place seems plainly to ascribe what is said there to God himself^b. These Apostles likewise bear Testimony to the Book of *Job* and the last recommends it, together with the Prophets, *who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an Example of suffering Affliction, and of Patience*^c. But there is the less occasion to be solicitous about every particular Book in the Old Testament, since St. Paul has confirmed the Authority of them all, not only in the Words of the Text, but also where he tells us that *Whatsoever things were written afore*

^a See the following Passages, viz. Rom. III. 4, 10, &c. IV. 7, 8. VIII. 36. X. 18. XI. 9, 10. XV. 3, 9, 11. 1 Cor. III. 20. X. 25, 17. 2 Cor. IX. 9. Ephes. IV. 8. Heb. I. 5, to the End of the Chapter. Heb. II. 6, 7, 8, 12, 13. III. 7, 8, 9, &c. IV. 3, 5, 7. V. 6. VII. 17, 21. X. 5, 6, &c. XIII. 6. It seems clear from these Passages that St. Paul did not consider the *Psalms* of David as a Book of Songs, that had nothing of prophetic in them. See *Five Letters concerning Inspiration* &c. p. 103. ^b The A. of the *five Letters* says that "neither Christ nor his Apostles ever cite the works of Solomon, or the Book of *Job*; except that St. James praises the Patient of *Job*;" &c. p. 105. But see *Calamy on Inspiration*, p. 106. ^c 1 Cor. III. 19. Jam. V. 10, 11.

time, were written for our learning; that we
through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures
might have Hope^a. Every one in St. Paul's
time understood by the Scriptures a System of
Writings, that claimed to come from God.
And would he have countenanced this Claim,
by such a Passage as this, unless he had thought,
that it was justly founded; and that these Scrip-
tures, thro' Patience and Comfort of which we
might have hope, did really come from the God
of Patience and Consolation^b?

As to the Inspiration of St. Paul himself,
no one that calls himself a Christian can with
any Consistency deny it. His Pretensions to it
are so frequent, and so plain, that if he had
not, he must have been a grand Impostor.
He declares that the Gospel he preached was
not after Man, that he conferred not about it
with Flesh and Blood, or with any of the other
apostles, neither received he it of any Man, nei-
ther was taught it, but by the Revelation of Je-
sus Christ^c. What could this Gospel be which
was the Subject of St. Paul's Preaching, but
the Same which is the Subject of his Writings?
The whole Scheme of Salvation by Jesus Christ,
the Privileges and the Conditions of the Gos-

^a Rom. XV. 4. ^b V. 5. ^c See Gal. I.

pel-Covenant, the Doctrine of Justification, though not by the Works of the Law, either Natural or Jewish, yet by a *Faith that worketh by Love^a*, that comprehends all Christian Morality, and is the Root and Foundation of all Christian Obedience. This Gospel he received by the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, and this Gospel he preached with the *Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven^b*: *Which things* (says he, joining himself with the other Apostles,) *we also speak, not in the words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth^c*. It is very unreasonable then to suppose that he did not write, as well as preach, this Doctrine, under the same Divine Conduct and Direction. Indeed the very Character of his Writings themselves allow us not room to doubt of it. For they abound with Prophecies and Doctrines of mere Revelation, and Doctrines that are themselves a Sort of Prophecies; as are all Those that relate to the Future State of Christ Church, his second Advent, the Rise of Antichrist, and the like. So that here, to borrow our Author's own Observation, “the *Event* “which we see in the World establish the Credit of the Apostle, and prove that he ha

^a Gal. V. 6. ^b 1 Pet. I. 12. ^c 1 Cor. II. 13.

“some

"some Intercourse with Heaven; they prove that he was actually inspired^a." But then

We are reminded in another Place that "there are some things in the Epistles which are spoken without any Commandment from the Lord, in which the Apostles gave their Judgment;" and here it seems we have no Authority to say that *they did it by Inspiration*^b.

The Case here referred to, though expressed in this general manner, is only that of St. Paul in *1 Cor. vii.* where supposing all to be true which this Writer suspects, it only shews, that in a particular Point of present Expediency, about which the Apostle had been consulted, he had received no immediate direct Command from Heaven. This Exception, in this particular Case, is so far from hurting his general Claim to Inspiration, that it strengthens it: It shews the Honesty of this Apostle, and his Care not to obtrude any thing upon the Church, under the Stamp of Divine Authority, which really wanted that Impression. But after all, the Matter may be wholly mistaken, and the Opposition may lie not between St. Paul and Himself, as sometimes writing by Inspiration, and sometimes not; but between

what St. Paul determined in the then *present*^a *Distress*, and the Commands delivered by our Lord himself while he was here on Earth, obliging all Christians in all Ages of the World. And as to this Apostle's saying in the Conclusion of the Chapter, *and I think also that I have the Spirit of God*, it intimates no Distrust that he himself had of his Inspiration; but is a fine, and at the same time a severe Rebuke to some certain Persons in the Church of Corinth, who seem to have been as cautious in this Affair of Inspiration, as some certain Teachers now in our's. But to all such Teachers St. Paul said then, and to all such now his Words may be applied, *If a Man think himself to be a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the Commandments of the Lord^b.*

With regard to the other Apostles who wrote any Part of the New Testament, we must remember that according to our Lord most true Promise, they were *filled with the Holy Ghost*; who guided them *into all Truth*, taught them *all things*, and brought *all things* to their Remembrance, *whatsoever Christ had said unto them^b*. St. Mark and St. Luke indeed wen-

^a 1 Cor. XIV. 37. ^b John XIV. 26. XVI. 13.

not of this Number, but the Reason of the Case extends to them; and there is no Cause to think that in that miraculous Age, when there was so plentiful an Effusion of the Spirit, these Men should be left wholly to themselves in compiling those Writings, which are of perpetual Use and Benefit to the Church. Indeed, as both the Jewish and Christian Religion are founded upon Facts, it seems a Sort of Inconsistency in the Divine Conduct, that the Historians who record these Facts, should be left exposed to all the Mistakes and Inconveniences of human Frailty. God himself was the King of the Jews in a peculiar Manner, and the History of that Church and Nation is in Effect the History of his Government. And therefore it seems not at all wonderful, that Men raised up by his Providence, should be guided by his Spirit, to record as it were the Actions of his own Reign.

But I have been too tedious already to engage in this Point at present; let me only say that from the Character of the Persons who wrote these Histories, as far as these Authors can be known; from the Character they have always born in the Jewish, and in the Christian Church; and from the Countenance given to this Character by our Lord and his Apostles;

It should seem that they are of a Class far superior to any human Writings. Jews as well as Christians have had other Historians who wrote with great Faithfulness, as well as other Moralists who wrote with a pious Intention. Yet we see these Qualifications did not advance them to the same high Rank with the Other, nor are their Compositions reckoned a Part of the sacred Volume. It must be want of Acquaintance with the Scriptures, or Prejudice against them, that hinders us from subscribing to this Judgment of Antiquity. For to a Mind duly disposed to study them, they discover their Origin by their own intrinsic Excellence. They may not be all of the same Usefulness and Dignity; nor are any other of the Works of God; but in this, as in other respects, resemble the Lights of Heaven; where though one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, yet they all declare the Glory of God, and proclaim the Omnipotence, and the Wisdom of Him that made them.



The E N D.